



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**DELORES RUBIN**  
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District Manager

April 8, 2016

Manhattan Borough Commissioner Margaret Forgione  
Department of Transportation  
59 Maiden Lane, 37<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10038

**RE: Proposed 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue Safety Improvements**

Dear Commissioner Forgione,

Manhattan Community Board 4 is pleased with the overall proposed phased implementation plan for converting 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue to two ways south of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and one way north of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. This proposal is in response to a CB4 request based on a recommendation of the Hell's Kitchen Traffic Study that calls for better balancing the traffic between 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenues. Based on the details presented, we support the proposal, but we'd like to see a number of suggestions incorporated in the plan to improve safety and help drivers navigate the new configuration.

11<sup>th</sup> Avenue currently allows for two-way traffic south of 24<sup>th</sup> Street, southbound one-way 24<sup>th</sup> to 37<sup>th</sup> Streets, two-way between 37<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> Streets, southbound one-way between 40<sup>th</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> Streets and two-way north of 44<sup>th</sup> Street.

The plan proposes to expand the two way segment from 42<sup>nd</sup> Street all the way south to route 9A in two phases:

The segment from 37<sup>th</sup> to 34<sup>th</sup> street that used to be two-way before the avenue repaving, will be returned to two-way in July 2016.

The segment from 34<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> Street will be converted to two-way at a later date, when the construction of the Hudson Yards sites is closer to completion.

The plan further proposes to expand the one-way segment from 44<sup>th</sup> to 53<sup>rd</sup> Street in September 2016.

In addition, the plan includes many pedestrian safety improvements at various intersections along the corridor, increases loading and unloading space and provides for turn lanes.

**Phase 1- Changes to 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 34<sup>th</sup> to 42<sup>nd</sup> Street**

Restore the two-way traffic between 34<sup>th</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> Streets.

- We welcome this change, which will allow Lincoln Tunnel bound traffic to use 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue as well as 10<sup>th</sup> – currently overloaded.  
We note that this area could use flexible cones or other separation to clearly show vehicles that the segment is two-way.

Improve pedestrian safety:

- **High visibility markings:** A convention center visitor was recently killed in the crossing of 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue at 37<sup>th</sup> Street. These east-west pedestrian crossings are heavily used by out of town visitors to the Javits Center but they are currently poorly marked. We request that all pedestrian crossings between south 34<sup>th</sup> Street and north 42<sup>nd</sup> street be equipped with high visibility markings to put the vehicles on notice that many pedestrians do cross there.
- **34<sup>th</sup> Street and 11th Avenue – Split phases:** We are pleased that the eastbound 34<sup>th</sup> Street will be equipped with a turn lane to turn north onto 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Considering the volume of Javits visitors, discount buses travelers and Highline visitors, most them from out to town, it would be beneficial to install split phase signals for all turn lanes, so that all turns from 34<sup>th</sup> street happen in a single phase and do not conflict with pedestrian crossings.
- **40<sup>th</sup> Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue- pedestrian crossing phase:** We are also pleased that DOT will make the intersection of 40<sup>th</sup> street and 11<sup>th</sup> avenue safer for pedestrians: with two major vehicular feeds converging toward the Lincoln tunnel entrance, the east side crossing of 40<sup>th</sup> street was banned to pedestrians, not a sustainable solution in a part of the district that is becoming residential. Three options were presented to address this intersection. Two of them would limit the eastbound movements of vehicular traffic, and thus conflict with the Javits Convention center plan for its trucks to access the Lincoln tunnel directly from the new marshaling yards entrance on 40<sup>th</sup> Street. We recommend Option 3, which would create a third phase for pedestrians to cross. Such a phase need not delay the Lincoln Tunnel flow (although there is virtually no flow at peak hours), but instead would take time away from the through traffic phase on 40<sup>th</sup> Street.
- **42<sup>nd</sup> Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue - Split Phase:** This intersection is one of the priority intersections in the DOT Vision Zero Pedestrian Safety Action Plan for Manhattan<sup>1</sup>. Thousands of new residents in this area rely heavily on walking for their transportation needs. We request that DOT study the crashes at that location, report their finding to CB4 and install proper signals to protect the dangerous crossings.

## **Phase 2- Changes to 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 44<sup>th</sup> to 53<sup>rd</sup> Street**

Convert 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue from two-way to one way southbound between 44<sup>th</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> Street.

- CB4 is on record for supporting such a change in order to reduce the congestion on 11<sup>th</sup> avenue and prevent drivers from going the wrong way between 44<sup>th</sup> and

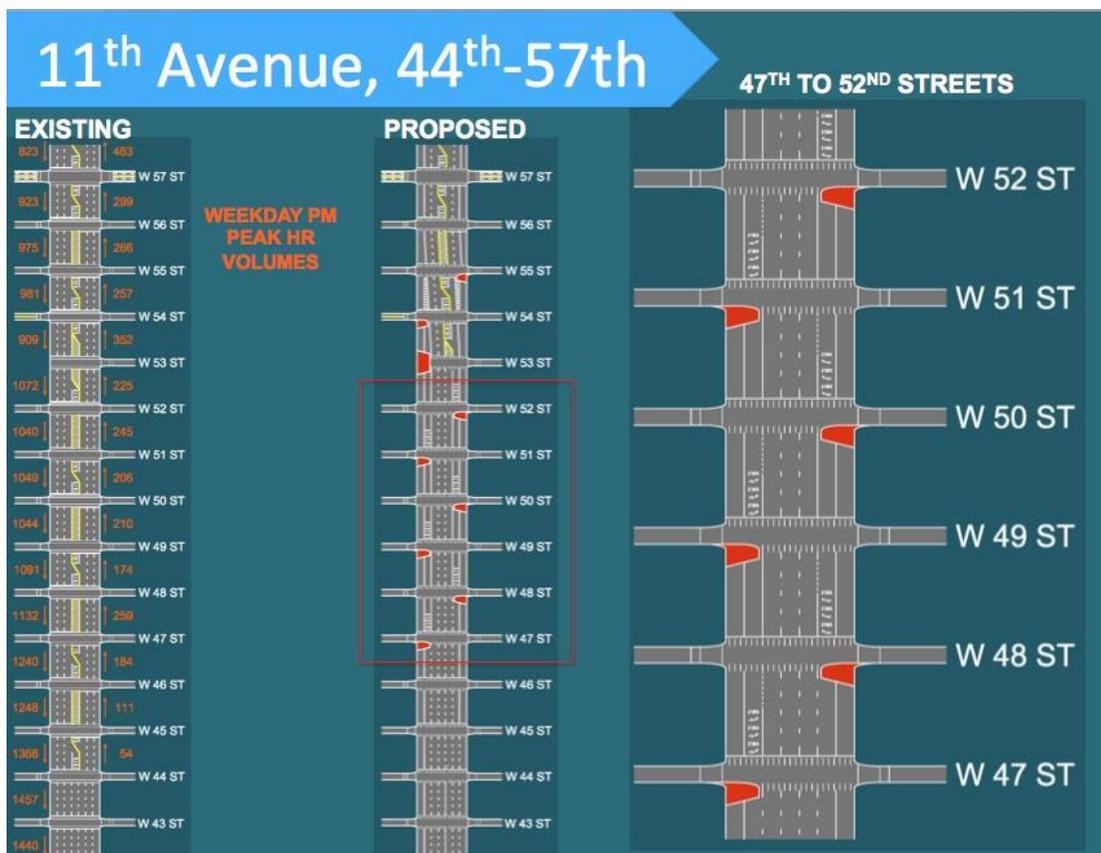
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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/ped-safety-action-plan-manhattan.pdf>

45<sup>th</sup> streets. There will be no change to the number of moving lanes or parking regulations.

- In order to facilitate local flow on the west side of the avenue we recommend that the lane separation between tunnel and local traffic be extended up to the 46<sup>th</sup> street intersection.
- We also recommend that proper signage be installed overhead starting at 47<sup>th</sup> Street to direct tunnel traffic to the three eastern lane of the avenue, and local traffic to the western lanes. While remaining at a city scale, signage should be large enough (larger than 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue bus lane) to be clearly visible.
- Pedestrian safety: Tunnel bound travelers often forget that they are on city streets. We request that all pedestrian crossings on this segment be equipped with high visibility markings.

Convert 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue from two-way to one-way southbound between 47<sup>th</sup> and 53<sup>rd</sup> Street. The current avenue with four traffic lanes, a turning lane and two parking lanes will be reconfigured with three moving lanes in the center, two parking lanes on one side and a parking lane plus a one turning lane on the other. A two-lane wide sidewalk extension will reduce the crossing length for pedestrian on each of the south crossings. Planters and greenery will be installed on them and maintained by a local maintenance partner. We are very pleased with the proposed configuration, which provides meaningful space to pedestrians and calms the traffic.



- CB4 is on record for supporting such a change. We are disappointed that the change is limited to 53<sup>rd</sup> Street to the north. Our request was that the changed configuration starts at a major intersection, 57<sup>th</sup> Street, which would be less confusing to drivers. We heard from residents that 53<sup>rd</sup> Street is problematic and would not be the best choice for a boundary. While trying to make 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue easier to navigate, by creating this new segment DOT adds back unnecessary complexity. We urge DOT to reconsider this decision and recommend they extend the change to 57<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Pedestrian safety: 53<sup>rd</sup> Street is already a very dangerous intersection used by park goers, convention attendees and an increasing number of residents. We request that the southbound turn from 53<sup>rd</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue be equipped with a split phase signal to make this intersection safer.

We appreciate DOT's presentation and its efforts to respond to our requests. We encourage the DOT to review our suggestions and come back to present a final design to the community board before implementation.

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin  
Chair



Christine Berthet  
Co-Chair, Transportation  
Planning Committee



Ernest Modarelli  
Co-Chair, Transportation  
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